

## THE GEORGIA BAPTIST CONVENTION AND GOSPEL WORK AMONG THE NEGROES.

At the Georgia Baptist Convention at Valdosta, Ga., a year ago, an appeal was received from the women of Georgia, asking the Board of Missions to put forth special evangelistic effort among the negroes of Georgia, and we understand that this appeal was approved by the Convention.

At the Convention this year (held at Dublin) Gov. Northen, who for many years has been elected chairman, declined a re-election. The members affectionately honored him with a gold watch in appreciation of his past services.

Being then on the floor of the Convention, rather than in the chair, Gov. Northen called attention to the fact that during the year little or no work has been done among the negroes by the Baptist Board of Missions. Dr. Bennett explained this by the fact that the resources of the Board had been too limited to allow of expansion, and that the opening of work among the negroes would have involved the cessation of important work among the whites.

Governor Northen is happy in his proposition that he would rather see a million negroes in the South soundly converted, than twice that number of Chinese or savages. For these negroes have been placed by God in the midst of us, for them we have a special and peculiar responsibility.

Dr. Bennett called attention to the fact that of the negroes in this country one-third are already enrolled as Baptists: "When the whites catch up with the negroes, and not until then, can we neglect our own work to look after the negroes."

But in the discussion, the fact was also developed that a large proportion of the negro preachers as well as members, are sadly inconsistent in life and deficient in education. It is also true that to a large extent the colored people prefer preachers and churches of their own color, and do not attend services of the whites.

From all of which this inference was drawn: that the special field of work for the Baptists lies in opening theological schools in which colored preachers may be trained in standards of purity and in Biblical knowledge. The work which the Presbyterians have done at Tuscaloosa was mentioned with commendation.

Well may it be so mentioned. If the Stillman Institute had done no more than to raise up our missionary Sheppard and make him in Africa a bulwark against Belgian cruelty as well as a powerful preacher of the gospel it may well be praised. It has done this and more; very much more. And if our people will sustain it efficiently in their collections this month, it will do greatly more in the year to come.

We do not know what institutions the Southern Baptists now have for the training of colored men for the pulpit. They certainly have a splendid opportunity for work in this line. There are thousands of young men accessible for this end. Among the hundreds of thousands of colored Baptists, there are a great many who would gladly attend a theological school, conducted by the whites; and with the training there received, they would labor more effectively among their own people and they would raise the

standard of gospel work in all their churches. There is a great work before them and us in this direction.

## A PROCESSION OF BIBLE CLASSES.

On a recent Sabbath afternoon an occurrence of unusual interest was witnessed on the streets of Richmond, Va. Four thousand men, with Bibles in hand, making a procession which extended several blocks in length, marched four abreast through several of the principal streets. It represented the Federation of Bible Classes of the city. Thousands of people from the sidewalks and their homes witnessed the impressive scene. At the end of their march they assembled in an auditorium where they were greeted by Governor Swanson in a strong and impressive address. The governor had a great theme, "The Bible", to which he paid a splendid tribute—reverent, positive, clear. He said our national greatness—our liberties, intelligence, virtue, resourcefulness—were built on the Bible. His estimate of the Book was that it is God's message to men. The commonwealth is blessed whose chief executive believes that "The Word of God which is contained in the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him."

The mere passing through the streets, of this goodly company, in orderly procession, may be regarded as an event of only minor importance, yet when considered in its relation to other facts it is of no mean consequence. The secular press spoke of it as the most impressive sight that had been witnessed in the city in recent years. The men were described as a splendid body of citizens representing the best of every department of worthy citizenship and vocation in the community. This is strong testimony to the value of the Bible in moulding men for responsible positions in society and as citizens of the State. The distinctive badge of these men at this time was that they were friends of the Bible, believers in its testimony and students of its truths. This testimony was given to their fellow citizens and through them to the world. This "body of citizens representing the best" believe that the Bible is the bulwark of all that is worthy to be protected and cherished in human affairs.

These men represented the several evangelical denominations of the city. Yet upon that which is the source of the knowledge of God and the basis of our faith in him they thoroughly, and in this event, formally united. When men with open Bibles sincerely agree that its testimony shall be the final appeal of all questions of faith and practice, they can not be very far from the kingdom nor very far from one another. To the promotion of such unity we may well contribute our good will and our earnest effort.

Is it not a sign of the times that four thousand representative business men in a single community should form a federation upon the one basis of the Bible—loyalty to its teachings and devotion to its truths? Here is not a single theorist in his cloistered retreat evolving primal concepts from his inner consciousness, but a host of witnesses amidst the busy activities of real life, accustomed to weigh evidence and test truth upon their practical merits, declaring as with one voice that the Bible is the Word of God, worthy of